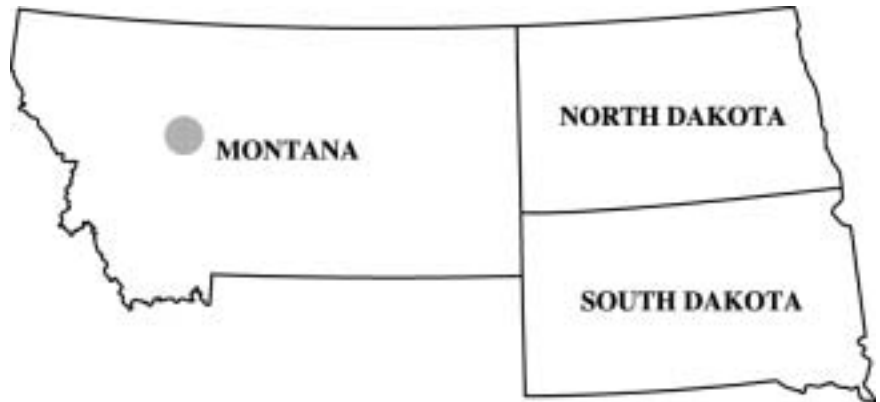




Visitor Center for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- \$ The community of Fort Benton has proposed a new visitor center to replace the BLM's existing visitor contact station.
- \$ Congress has appropriated \$2.5 million for construction of a new facility. However, BLM is concerned about long-term funding for operations, maintenance and staffing.
- \$ BLM has worked with the community to determine the size, scope and location of a new visitor center, and has signed an agreement with the city and the River and Plains Society.



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- \$ The need for improved visitor facilities surfaced in the late 1980s.
- \$ BLM's current 750-square-foot visitor contact station is in Fort Benton's downtown area in a small, converted house that is more than 100 years old.
- \$ As the head of the 149-mile Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River and the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, Fort Benton is experiencing increased tourism that is being fed by the approaching Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.
- \$ Tourism provides an economic boost to the local economy, but there is also recognition of infrastructure needs such as an improved visitor center.



WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- \$ BLM needs to secure funding for future operations, maintenance costs, and staffing.
- \$ We will need to complete an environmental assessment that studies possible impacts the visitor center may have and whether the old Fort Benton water plant can be incorporated into the design. We hope to complete the EA by summer 2002.

WHO ELSE IS CONCERNED?

- \$ Local public interest is high.
- \$ The concept has support from both county and city officials. Several town meetings were held to help identify a course of action.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Richard Hopkins, Special Assistant to the Lewistown Field Manager, (406) 791-7763.

